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ABSTRACT

One of the primary themes of this drama unit is to help students develop an appreciation and respect for diverse traditions. The unit focuses on Jerusalem in the state of Israel, where Jews, Moslems, and Christians find religious inspiration within the walls of the Old City. According to the unit, it is important that students be able to distinguish among the various religious traditions based upon historic precedent. A second theme of the unit is to understand the impact that the formation of Israel in 1948 had on the various groups living in the region at the time, and its implication for conflict today. The unit cites specific lesson objectives, lists materials needed, outlines a sequence of teacher activities, and gives evaluation procedures. The 4-scene play outlined in the unit takes place in the Old City of Jerusalem in October 1998 and contains five characters from diverse cultures. (Contains a list of 13 additional sources and the addresses of 3 organizations concerned with the peace process.) (BT)

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"Jerusalem: A City of Diversity"

A Play

SO 030 767

Curriculum Project in fulfillment of
Fulbright-Hays Seminar, 1998

Colleen Kelley Boyett

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COLLEEN K. BOYETT
WORLD HISTORY (9TH GRADE)
"JERUSALEM: A CITY OF DIVERSITY"

LESSON CONCEPT/GENERALIZATION

One of the primary themes of the unit is to help students develop an appreciation and respect for diverse traditions. This is particularly applicable in the case of the city of Jerusalem in the state of Israel. Jews, Moslems, and Christians find religious inspiration within the walls of the Old City. It is important that the student is able to distinguish among the various religious traditions based upon historic precedent. Another main theme of the unit is to understand the impact the formation of Israel in 1948 had on the various groups living in the region at the time, and its implications for conflict today.

SPECIFIC LESSON OBJECTIVES

Cognitive

The student should be able to list the major beliefs of Jews, Christians, and Moslems.

Process

The student should be able to explain why Jerusalem is important to followers of each of these three major world religions.

MATERIALS NEEDED:

The teacher will need. . .

Copy of Script

The students will need. . .

Copy of Script
Microphone
Jewish Prayer Shawl
Rosary
Postcards
Prayer Mat

SEQUENCE OF TEACHER ACTIVITIES

Advance Organizer

The teacher will read the following quote by John Stuart Mill: "The only way in which a human being can make some approach to knowing the whole of a subject, is by hearing what can be said about it by persons of every variety of opinion, and studying all modes in which it can be looked at by every character of mind. No wise man ever acquired his wisdom in any mode but this.

The teacher will then ask the following question: "What accounts for the disparate claims for the city of Jerusalem over the centuries?

Body of the lesson

The problem:

Three major groups of people have claimed possession of the City historically: Jews, Christians, and Arabs. These claims have been based on historical, political, and religious reasons. The problem has been exacerbated in the 20th century, especially between Israeli Jews and Palestinian Arabs, due to colonialism.

Background of the problem:

Birth of Zionism

Anti Semitism and Pogroms in Europe
Theodor Herzel and political Zionism

British Colonialism

T. E. Lawrence and Sir Mark Sykes gave promises of Arab autonomy after the War if the Arabs would support the Allies against the Ottoman Turks.
Balfour Declaration--1917
British Mandate of Palestine

The Impact of the Holocaust

Persecution of Jews in Europe during World War II underlined the need for a homeland for Jewish people. The British were in the unenviable position of having to placate both Arabs and Jews over the land of Palestine

Important events

1947--Partition rejected by Arabs
1948--Israel statehood declared
1956--Suez Crisis
1967--The Six Day War
1973--The Yom Kippur War
1979--The Camp David Peace Accords
1994--Oslo Accords
1998--Wye River Agreement

Palestinian claims:

Historical--Arabs have lived in the area since time immemorial. Arabs claim descent from the patriarch Abraham (through his son Ishmael) who settled the area then known as Canaan.
Religious--Jerusalem is the third holiest site in Islam. Because most Palestinians are Moslems, the Dome of the Rock (built on top of the destroyed Jewish temple) is of religious importance.
Political--The British promised Arab autonomy to Arabs who fought against the Ottoman Turks. This promise of self-determination was not carried out.

Israeli claims:

Historical--Jews also claim Abraham as a patriarch (through his son Isaac). The Kingdom of Israel was overrun by the Assyrians in 722 BC and Judah was conquered by the Babylonians in 586 BC. Later, some Jews returned but were finally scattered (Diaspora) throughout the Roman world by AD 135.
Religious--According to the Old Testament (Gen. 35: 10-12), "Israel shall be your name...a nation and a congregation of nations

shall descend from you...The land that I gave to Abraham and to Isaac, I will give to you; and to your offspring after you."
Political--The Balfour Declaration supported a national Jewish home in Palestine for the Jewish Zionists in Europe.Persecution in Europe, especially Russia, prompted European Jews to seek a safe haven.

Obstacles to peace

Jerusalem: a city holy to three religions
Scarcity of water and other natural resources
Continued Israeli settlement on disputed lands
Continued terrorist activity

CLOSING ACTIVITY:

The teacher will ask the students to comment on the recent agreement reached in Maryland by Israeli Prime Minister Benyamin Netanyahu and PLO Chairman Yasir Arafat .

EVALUATION PROCEDURES:

The teacher will pass out a list of source materials, including a list of organizations who support the peace process, as well as a bibliography for further reading. The students will be asked to select one of the books from the list to read and then to write a response paper.

Jerusalem: A City of Diversity

Setting: Old City of Jerusalem, October 1998

Characters:

Reporter
Christian pilgrim
Orthodox Jew
Little Arab Boy
Arab Moslem

Props:

microphone
Jewish prayer shawl
Rosary
Postcards
Prayer mat

Scene I

Hello! Your on-the-spot reporter here in one of the world's oldest cities: Jerusalem. Over the course of its long history, Jerusalem has been controlled by many different armies, and has come to be considered a holy city by three of the world's most important religions. In order to appreciate the diverse nature of its population, and to understand the roots of the conflicts that seem to continually wrack its citizens, we'll be interviewing passers-by from our vantage point just outside of the Jaffa Gate entrance to the Old City. Oh look! Here's someone now.

Reporter: Good morning! It's mighty early to be out and about in the city. Who are you and where on earth are you going at six o'clock in the morning?

Christian Pilgrim: (*rosary hanging on her neck)* My name is Sister

Miriam Sophia, and I'm on my way to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre for mass.

Reporter: But I thought that Jerusalem was a Jewish city?

Christian Pilgrim: It is, of course! But Christianity is a religion established on the teachings of a Jewish rabbi, Jesus of Nazareth. In fact, many Christian traditions are rooted in Jewish practices.

Reporter: For example?

Christian Pilgrim: Take the Christian practice of baptism. It's very similar to a widely-practiced Jewish tradition , the ritual bath, or mikvah. Also, the Christian story of the Last Supper, the inspiration for communion, was modeled after a Jewish Passover Seder. The New Testament, the basis for Christian teachings, reveals many details of Jesus' life in Israel, including his death, burial, and--very important to me--his resurrection.

Reporter: Is that why you're going to the Church?

Christian Pilgrim: The site of the Holy Sepulchre was identified by the mother of the Roman emperor Constantine as the site of Golgotha, or Calvary. This is the place where devout Christians like me believe Jesus died. Constantine ordered a church built there in 335 AD. Later, during the Crusades, there was a period of time when Jerusalem was controlled by Europeans, who came with the intention of making sure that such sites were protected and open for visits from Christian pilgrims. Many holy sites-including the Church that I am going to this morning, were rebuilt at that time.

Reporter: Well, thank you for your time. I don't want to make you late for mass.

Christian Pilgrim: Good bye, my son, and God Bless!

Scene II

Reporter: Here comes someone else. . .Let me see if I can get his attention. Sir, I'm a reporter. Could you tell me your name, please?

Orthodox Jew: Shalom. My name is Rabbi Cohen.

Reporter: I notice that you are wearing a shawl that looks alot like the Israeli flag. Could you tell me about it?

Orthodox Jew: But of course! This is my *talit*, or prayer shawl. It has four *tzitzit* , sets of strings knotted and twisted to represent the Lord's commandments.

Reporter: And where are you headed so early this morning?

Orthodox Jew: To the Western Wall, also known as the Wailing Wall. My son from Chicago is holding his son's *BarMitzvah* there today, and I will be conducting it. While I'm there, I will wedge into the Wall a prayer that I have written on a piece of paper.

Reporter: What is significant about this Wall?

Orthodox Jew: Actually, the Wall is one of the only parts of the destroyed Jewish temple that still remains. Originally built by Solomon (and destroyed by the Babylonians), it was later rebuilt by Herod and destroyed again, this time by the Romans. It's become a symbol for all Jews--a place where we can go and voice our concerns to our God--as well as remembér the glory and the suffering of our people.

Reporter: Your people have suffered a lot in recent years. I visited

Yad Vashem yesterday and was especially moved by the Children's Memorial there.

Orthodox Jew: I was a child during the Holocaust. My own parents died at Auschwitz. After the War, I attempted to come to Palestine, but ended up in a camp in Cyprus. Conditions were horrible, but the British were in control of the land at the time, and had issued a White Paper that severely restricted Jewish immigration. Eventually I made my way to Eretz Israel, where I was able to witness the events of 1948, when Israel once again became a state.

Reporter: How long had it been since the Jews had lived here?

Orthodox Jew: Nearly 2,000 years. As I said the Romans destroyed the second temple and expelled the Jews in 70 CE. Jews were dispersed throughout the world. We refer to this as the Diaspora. They were expelled from their own land. However, there was always a remnant that remained, especially in the four holy cities.

Reporter: And which cities are they?

Orthodox Jew: Safed, Tiberias, Hebron, and of course, Jerusalem.

Reporter: What do you mean by 70 "CE"?

Orthodox Jew: Jewish people who adhere strictly to the Talmud, the Jewish law, believe that our God will one day send a messiah. During the Roman era, a minority of Jews began to believe that a Jewish rabbi by the name of Jesus of Nazareth was that messiah. This idea spread to people in the Roman Empire. Christianity, as this new religion was called, became the dominant religion in Europe. However, true Jews never believed Jesus was the messiah.

Anyway, Christians use Jesus Christ's birth as the

demarcation line in their history, using "BC: to refer to "Before Christ," and "AD" or "Anno Domini" (in the year of the Lord) to refer to the time after his birth. Because Jews do not accept Jesus to be the promised one, we prefer to use the terms "BCE" for "before the common era" and "CE" for the "common era."

Reporter: Thank you for sharing a little of your history with our listeners. Well, we don't want to keep you from your grandson on this very important day.

Orthodox Jew: Shalom.

Scene III

Little Arab Boy: *(waving a fistful of postcards)* Would you like to buy, Mister?

Reporter: Uh, no son, not right now.

Little Arab Boy: I"ll make you a good price!

Reporter: *(having a change of heart)* Say, aren't you an enterprising little fellow! What are you selling there?

Little Arab Boy: Postcards of Christian sites in the city. Won't you buy some?

Reporter: I thought all Arabs were Muslim! What are you doing selling Christian stuff?

Little Arab Boy: Well sir, my family is a Christian family. My father runs a little pottery stall in the Christian sector of town. I sell postcards to help my family--I have 10 brothers and sisters.

Reporter: Do you know, perhaps I CAN use some postcards. How

much are they?

Little Arab Boy: Twelve shekels.

Reporter: TWELVE SHEKELS? That's alot of money! How about four shekels?

Little Arab Boy: OK. I'll take eight.

Reporter: It's a deal.

Little Arab Boy: Shukran.

Scene IV

(the Muslim call to prayer sounds throughout the city, startling the reporter)

Reporter: What is that sound!

(man with a prayer mat under his arm approaches)

Arab Moslem: That is the call to prayer. Five times a day faithful Muslims face Mecca and pray to Allah.

Reporter: Who are you?

Arab Muslim: Marhaban. My name is Akram.

Reporter: Could you explain a few things to me about your beliefs?

Arab Muslim: In sha allah! *(If God wills it)*

Reporter: Why do Muslims face Mecca?

Arab Muslim: They face Mecca because that is where Mohammed lived and received visitations from the Angel Gabriel. However, before Mohammed's death, Muslims faced Jerusalem for prayer. Muslims call Jerusalem "Al Quds

al-Sharif--the Holy and Noble City.

Reporter: Why is Jerusalem so special to Muslims?

Arab Muslim: According to Islamic tradition, Mohammed journeyed one night from Mecca to Jerusalem on the back of a winged horse. From the area where today is situated the El-Aqsa Mosque and the Dome of the Rock, he arose up to the seventh Heaven, returning the same night back to Mecca.

Reporter: You mentioned the importance of prayer. What other religious obligations must Muslims perform?

Arab Muslim: In addition to prayer, Muslims are expected to state unequivocally that Allah is God and Mohammed is his prophet, give to charity, and fast during the holy month of Ramadan. Finally, once in our life, we are expected to make a pilgrimage to Mecca.

Reporter: Giving to charity and fasting sound like Judaism and Christianity.

Arab Muslim: That's because we have roots in those religions. Muslims believe that the Koran contains the revelations of Allah to Moses. In our holy book, we find Muslims prophets like Noah and Moses. We believe that Jesus was a prophet, but not the Son of God. In fact, Muslims refer to Jews and Christians as "People of the Book," because we recognize our common roots.

Reporter: I have another question for you, Akram. What do you think about the on-going peace process between the Palestinian Arabs and the Israeli Jews? Are you hopeful that a lasting peace will one day exist in this city?

Arab Muslim: My family has lived here for hundreds of years. Many

of my relatives fled the area in 1948 when the Zionist state of Israel was established. Some live now in Jordan, where they have been granted citizenship. However, my father chose to stay. I have sometimes wondered at the wisdom of his decision, but this is our home.

Reporter: I see that you are wearing the uniform of the Israel Defense Force--the Israeli Army. I didn't think Arabs served in the military.

Arab Muslim: In this country, all Jewish citizens are required to perform mandatory military service. Indeed, many employers favor veterans for employment. As an Arab, I cannot be drafted to serve with the Israeli Defense Force. However, who will hire me? I will always be last on the list for a job. So, I recently enlisted. My older brother, and yes, my entire village believe I am a traitor. But what can I do? I need to support my family, and for that I need veteran status in order to get a good job!

Reporter: What about the Arabs living on the West Bank?

Arab Muslim: That is a separate issue. When Israel won the Six Day War in 1967, it won not only this Old City, but also the Gaza Strip, the Golan Heights, and the West Bank. Jewish settlers began establishing communities in the area. Arabs living in the West Bank now are demanding autonomy. The Palestinian authority is having a difficult time convincing the Israelis that it is combatting terrorism, while at the same time meeting the economic challenges confronting their own people in the region.

(the Muslim call to prayer sounds again)

Reporter: I wish you well. Perhaps Mr. Netanyahu and Mr. Arafat will be successful in reaching a peace agreement this week.

Arab Muslim: Ma' Salaam. Good-bye. And remember for all of us, to pray for the peace of Jerusalem.

Additional sources that may be helpful to teachers as they prepare lesson plans, as well as to students for background reading . . .

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Organizations that are concerned with the peace process . . .

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